

The list of shrubs, flowers, and weeds cultivated is disfigured by an unusual number of printer's "weeds," though it is scarcely fair to the "compositors" to attribute to them errors for which the author ought to be held responsible. If the book should, as is very likely to be the case, appear in a second edition, it is to be hoped that this list will be revised by someone familiar with the names of plants and with the way in which they should be spelt.

*Guide to the Analysis of Potable Spirits.* By S. Archibald Vasey. Pp. ix+87. (London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, 1904.) Price 3s. 6d. net.

THE analysis of potable spirits has within recent time acquired increased importance on account of the attention now given by medical men and others to the characters of potable alcohol, and also on account of the action of inspectors under the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts in connection with the attempts which are being made by various local authorities throughout the country to put a stop to the misdescription of spirits. The Acts under which the Excise authorities work unfortunately contain no adequate definition of such articles as whisky and brandy, and this omission has undoubtedly facilitated the manufacture of factitious spirits. At the present time there is practically no official control over the sale of ardent spirits beyond ensuring to the customer, solely in the interest of the Revenue, that their alcoholic strength shall not be below a certain minimum. The Revenue authorities are not concerned to know whether what is called whisky is a pot-still or a patent still spirit, whether it is made from raw grain or malt, or whether it is old or new. To them it is a matter of little moment whether what is called brandy is genuine grape spirit, or whether it is a rectified spirit obtained from maize or potatoes, flavoured with so-called essence of brandy and coloured with caramel.

Those who trade in these things are, however, taking steps to ensure that purchasers who, in the words of the Act, are entitled to be supplied with articles "of the nature, substance and quality demanded," shall be served with genuine grape-spirit when they ask for "brandy," and the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts have been set in motion to secure this, and convictions under their provisions have already been obtained. Now that a decision of one of the higher courts has been given, confirming those of the courts below, the local authorities will doubtless continue to take action, and public analysts will probably be very busy with such cases. Mr. Vasey's book, therefore, appears at an opportune time, and may be recommended to the notice of all who are interested in the subject of differentiating spirits.

*Forestry in the United Kingdom.* By Prof. W. Schlich, F.R.S. Pp. 72. (London: Bradbury, Agnew and Co., Ltd., n.d.)

THIS book gives a very able exposition of the pressing need of extended and improved forestry in the United Kingdom. It deals with certain important points already discussed, as the author informs us, in lectures at various centres. Prof. Schlich sets forth a very strong case in favour of the better management of British woodlands. His arguments, supported by very convincing statistics, are such as should meet with the approval and support of all interested in the subject. The problem of how to utilise to the best advantage our enormous acreage of waste land is ably dealt with, and in our opinion settled by the author in chapter iii. This chapter contains a most interesting discussion on the conflicting interests of forests and game pre-

serves; Prof. Schlich, however, shows how these may be reconciled. The chapter also contains numerous practical hints and yield tables showing the financial return to be expected from properly managed woods. We cannot close this notice without mentioning the excellent series of photographs illustrating the natural regeneration of beech, the production of high-class oak timber, and the proper density of spruce woods. The photographs have been judiciously chosen by the author, and included to show what result can be achieved when forests are treated in a rational and systematic manner.

*Ready Reference Tables.* Vol. i. Conversion Factors. Compiled by Carl Hering. Pp. xviii+196. (New York: John Wiley and Sons; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1904.) Price 10s. 6d. net.

THIS is the first of a series of reference tables which Mr. Hering has in course of preparation, and which are intended to contain all the data most generally required by engineers and physicists. The author has aimed not only at making the tables handy for reference, but also at making them complete and accurate to a degree not usually attained by pocket books. Thus in the present volume the conversion factors are given to six or more significant figures, their reciprocals are given, and also seven-figure logarithms. This is a degree of accuracy which can be but rarely required, and in deference, we suppose, to the practical engineer, the author has added approximate fractional values; everyone, therefore, should be able to find what he wants. All the values have been most carefully re-calculated and checked from the various legal definitions, thus making the data authoritative. The value of the book as a standard for reference cannot be questioned; the arrangement is more open to criticism, and we cannot help thinking that the method of tabulation adopted, which is to arrange all the tables in order of the size of the quantities, results in an unnecessary amount of repetition. For example, the same factor is repeated five times (with a change only in the position of the decimal point) for converting respectively milligrams, centigrams, decigrams, grams, and kilograms into grains. If this is really desirable, it should be consistently followed out; yet one finds the grain expressed only in terms of the milligram, centigram, and gram, the decigram only in terms of the grain and gram, and not otherwise mentioned in the table. The result is that one hardly knows where to look for what one wants, which considerably detracts from the merits of a compilation excellent in all other respects. M. S.

*A Compendium of Chemistry (including General, Inorganic and Organic Chemistry).* By Dr. Carl Arnold. Translated by John A. Mandel, Sc.D. Pp. xii+627. (New York: Wiley and Sons; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1904.) Price 15s. net.

THIS kind of book is perhaps more common and more popular, therefore, in Germany than in this country. It is neither a text-book nor a book of reference, but something between the two. Its aim seems to be rather to refresh the memory, if the word refresh can be used in this connection, than to train the mind. It is, in fact, a *multum in parvo* of information, which a student who had worried out his principles and theories beforehand, and merely required to marshal his facts and ideas, might use with advantage.

For example, the whole of chemical theory, including physical chemistry, is served up in the first hundred pages in a series of small doses of concen-